Social Questions
BULLETIN

of the Methodist Federation for Social Service (unofficial), an organization which rejects the method of the struggle for profit as the economic base for society; which seeks to replace it with social-economic planning in order to develop a society without class distinctions and privileges.

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Methodist Social Pronouncements

I. FEDERATION BIENNIAL CONFERENCE RESOLUTIONS

At the Biennial Conference of the Federation, held in Kansas City, Mo., May 9, 1939, these actions were taken and resolutions adopted in addition to those printed in the June BULLETIN.

WAR

The Conference approved the following foreign policies based on a test poll of the membership:

1. *The Boycott* of Japanese, German and Italian goods.

2. *An Embargo* upon the shipment of arms, munitions, implements of war, secondary war materials and upon the supplying of credit facilities to the aggressor nations.

3. *Selling* to the victims of aggressive warfare the means of defense under conditions designed in each case to remove the risk of our being drawn into war, *e.g.*, adaptations of the cash-and-carry principle.

4. *Concerted action* between the popular democratic forces in the democratic nations to promote in common the policies expressed under 1, 2 and 3 and to bring about for this purpose a conference of official representatives of the nations governed under democratic constitutions.

ANTI-SEMITISM

America is being bombarded today with Nazi and anti-Semitic propaganda coming from such Nazi organizations as the Fichte Bund, Nazi World Service News Agency, and the Nazi Party, and from native American groups of a Fascist character which have come into existence since Hitler came to power. Anti-Semitism is the banner around which the anti-democratic forces are being rallied.

We, therefore, call upon our fellow Christians and our Church organizations to expose the unchristian character of this propaganda, its nature and its sources, from pulpit and platform and on the air, in printed matter and by the passage of resolutions.

We plead for the triumph of good will toward all races, religious faiths, and minority groups. We pledge ourselves to work for an enlightened and tolerant Americanism. In particular, we charge ourselves with the duty of endeavoring to eliminate race prejudice and race discrimination from our congregations.

UNEMPLOYMENT

We believe that the Federal Government should institute, at the earliest possible moment, long-range planning and a long-time system of public works designed to dovetail into the expansion and contraction of private industry, and aimed at providing projects which will be of permanent benefit to the nation, both economically and culturally.

Congress should authorize a six-year plan providing for low-cost public housing, flood control, schools and community centers (both urban and rural), and yardstick plant production in basic industries to determine costs and to provide proper vocational opportunities for youth.

We suggest that the Federation and Federation members investigate and study: (a) the ways and means by which local communities can attack the problem of unemployment through initiating and carrying forward constructive enterprises; (b) the contribution the Consumers Cooperative Movement can make to the alleviation of unemployment; and (c) the significance and possible service of the National Resources Act now in Committee in Congress.

AGRICULTURAL WORKERS, TENANT FARMERS AND SHARE-CROPPERS

"One-third of the farm families are living on standards of living so low as to make them slum families. . . . Farm mothers chop cotton and pick cotton and then fail to get a new cotton dress at the end of the year. . . . Rural folk in the South have inadequate housing, limited household equipment . . . inadequate diet, lack of medical care, insufficient funds for clothing."

Therefore, Be It Resolved That: (a) The Methodist Federation for Social Service explore the possibilities of reaching this section of the nation, a section which is in large part religious, with a simple, direct interpretation of the issues of bread and democracy in ethical and Biblical terms; (b) that the location and accessibility of the rural pastorate of the Methodist Church be studied in cooperation with the rural pastors of other denominations, including in each case especially Negro preachers and lowly white preachers; and (c) that a program of education be

formulated in consultation with the leaders of the Farmers' Union and the United Cannery and Agricultural Workers' Union of America.

Over wide areas of the Midwest, Northwest and Southwest the rural population, more especially the increasing tenant population, largely unchurched, without effective and religious leadership, offers also a needy field of service for the Federation.

Therefore, Be It Resolved: That these should be explored and suitable forms of activity developed.

LYNCHING

All American citizens cannot attain full civil liberties when twelve million of them live under the constant threat of the lynching menace.

Over five thousand persons, 1400 of whom were white and the remainder Negroes, have been lynched since 1882 —many of them for minor offenses.

Therefore, Be It Resolved That: (a) We use every means at our disposal to make the public aware of this evil; (b) that we call upon our Church Boards to educate Methodists on this matter by addresses and through the use of the radio and the press; (c) that we record our conviction that Federal legislation in the form of an Anti-Lynching Bill is imperative.

EQUITABLE SUPPORT OF MINISTERS

Facing a world of distorted values, exploitation and injustice, the Methodist ministry must first put its own house in order, that it may serve as an example of economic brotherhood and speak with authority in the field of human relationships.

We believe that it is not only a matter of justice but the whole question of building or crushing personality is involved.

We, therefore, recommend that every Conference in Methodism establish: (a) a minimum salary; (b) a sustentation fund to supplement salaries on the basis of need; (c) a committee to study the matter of an equitable adjustment of salaries which would give consideration to ministerial efficiency, to the standard of living required in the various churches and communities and to the needs of the ministers' families. We especially request the committee to consider the establishment of a Central Treasury for the receiving and disbursing of salaries.

JURISDICTIONAL CONFERENCE RECONCILIATION COMMITTEES

We recommend that the Federation members in each Jurisdictional Conference of the Methodist Church set up Committees on Investigation and Reconciliation composed of an equal number of ministers and laymen.

The purpose of these committees shall be to seek to reconcile, after thorough investigation, differences which may arise between ministers and their congregations on such social issues as industrial conflicts, international war, race relationships and the maintenance of civil liberties.

COUNCIL ON A CHRISTIAN SOCIAL ORDER

We recommend that the Federation appoint a committee to work out a plan of cooperation with the Council on a Christian Social Order, an unofficial voluntary organization of members of the former Methodist Episcopal Church, South, whose purpose is "to work toward the discovery of the full social meaning of the Gospel and toward its application to the Social Order."

II. SOCIAL CREED OF UNITED METHODISM

The Uniting Conference of Methodism at Kansas City, Mo., on May 9, 1939, adopted "A Social Creed" from which the following excerpts are taken:

WAR

The Methodist Church "recognizes the need of an army and navy for police purposes. We stand for the repudiation of war and for the discovery and development of all reasonable methods to attain peace, for the reduction of armaments by all nations, participation in international agencies for the peaceable settlement of controversies, and for the building of a cooperative spirit among the nations. In this connection we insist that the agencies of the Church shall not be used in the preparation for war, but in the promulgation of peace.

"We believe that war is utterly destructive and is our greatest collective social sin and a denial of the ideals of Christ. We stand upon this ground, that The Methodist Church as an Institution cannot endorse war nor support or participate in it."

"The Methodist Church, true to the principles of the New Testament, teaches respect for properly constituted civil authority. It holds that government rests upon the support of its conscientious citizenship, and that conscientious objectors to war in any or all of its manifestations are a natural outgrowth of the principle of good will and the Christian desire for universal peace; and that such objectors should not be oppressed by compulsory military service anywhere or at any time.

"We ask and claim exemption from all forms of military preparation or service for all conscientious objectors who may be members of The Methodist Church. In this they have the authority and support of their Church. However, we recognize the right of the individual to answer the call of his government in an emergency according to the dictates of his Christian conscience."

SOCIAL JUSTICE

The Methodist Church "stands for the recognition and maintenance of the rights and responsibilities of free speech, free assembly, and a free press; and for the encouragement of free communication of mind with mind, as essential to the discovery of truth."

We stand "for equal rights and complete justice for all men in all stations of life."

"We stand for . . . the safeguarding of workers from the devastating results of enforced employment."

"We stand for the right of employees and employers alike, to organize for collective bargaining and social action; protection of both in the exercise of their right; the obligation of both to work for the public good."

"We stand for the principle of the acquisition of property by Christian processes, and believe in stressing the principle of stewardship in its use; practical application of the Christian principle of social well-being to the acquisition and use of wealth and *subordination of the profit motive to the creative and cooperative spirit.*"

"We stand for the rights of racial groups and insist that the above social, economic and spiritual principles apply to all races alike."

"We stand upon the right of various groups to believe in various peaceful methods for solving the problems that confront us; some who believe that we need a drastic readjustment of the social order to correct the acquisitiveness which characterizes us; others who believe in the correctional method for an economic order which they believe possesses the inherent good which has produced prosperity and is able to do so again; and still others in producers' and consumers' cooperatives. . . ."

SOCIAL PLANNING

The Social Creed of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, contained this section: "The Church stands for social planning and control of the credit and monetary systems and the economic processes for the common good." The Social Creed Committee of the Uniting Conference embodied substantially this section in its report but it was deleted by a very close vote. *Federation members, delegates to the 1940 General Conference, will you restore it?*

III. ANNUAL CONFERENCES GO ON RECORD

WAR

"We favor the amendment of the Neutrality Act so that no aggressor or treaty-breaking nation shall be able to purchase any materials of any kind from us, the decision as to which is an aggressor and treaty-breaking nation being in the hands of the President and Congress; and that we purchase nothing from them; and that our aid be extended to those nations which are the victims of aggressor or treaty-breaking nations."—*New York Conference, April, 1939.*

"We approve the attempt of the President of the United States to put the moral and economic strength of America upon the side of the world's democracies in their apparently belated decision to take a stand against the continued aggressions of the totalitarian states."—*New York Conference, April, 1939.*

"War continues to threaten the destruction of our civilization. We think the time has come when we should make whatever sacrifice necessary to satisfy the needs of growing industrial nations. But we condemn resort to war to gain these ends by any nation. . . . We favor the nationalization of munitions industry, non-cooperation in business with aggressor nations and aid of food and medical supplies to their victims. We believe some means of collective security for the democracies of the world might be devised under the auspices of the League of Nations."—*Colorado Conference, June, 1939.*

"The creation of peace and the erection of good will is to be achieved by the sacrificial effort of Christian men. We cannot do less than:

"1. To pray ceaselessly from public altars and hearts privately at worship, for peace and justice and the guidance of God's will.

"2. To lend aid and support to all victims of oppression, aggression and the will of evil men.

". . . We strongly urge our government to prevent the sale of all primary and secondary war materials to Japan, and to prevent the granting of loans or credits to Japan or any other assistance in her merciless invasion of a neighboring nation.

". . . We urge our members to study the plan of the union of fifteen democracies recently proposed by Clarence K. Streit in his book entitled 'Union Now.'

"We call attention to the fact that the drift in America toward war arises from the pressure of the unsolved American economic problem. The campaign for keeping America out of war cannot be separated from the struggle to establish a workable Christian economy.

"And we take the stand that we will in no wise support a decision to send our army and navy to participate in armed conflict outside the national boundaries of the U. S. A."—*New York East Conference, May, 1939.*

NATIONAL LABOR RELATIONS ACT

"We believe that the National Labor Relations Act, better known as the Wagner Labor Act, is a move in the direction of industrial justice and peace, and therefore should be supported by the Church and defended from any amendments which might destroy its effectiveness."—*Colorado Conference, June, 1939.*

COOPERATION OF LABOR GROUPS

"True friends of collective bargaining have been distressed by the confusion in local industries occasioned by the rivalries between the craft and industrial unions. It is our conviction that no obstacles to a united labor movement can possibly outweigh the advantages of cooperation to labor, the employer and the consumer. We join the Federal Council of Churches in urging the formation of all labor groups into one organization."—*New York East Conference, May, 1939.*

SOCIAL-ECONOMIC PLANNING

"Nothing less than social-economic planning will be able to put the idle capital, machines, mines, farms, factories and men back to work to produce and distribute the common needs of life or to furnish the potential cultural opportunities we might enjoy."—*Colorado Conference, June, 1939.*

News from the Field

Charles C. Webber's schedule up to October 10th will take him to the Ohio, Wisconsin, Iowa, Upper Iowa, Northwest Iowa, Northern Minnesota and Rock River Conferences.

While attending, in June, the Southern California Conference, where he addressed the members of our Federation Unit on "The Religious Significance of the Cooperative Movement," C. C. W. was told by Rev. A. A. Heist of Wilmington, Calif., the port of Los Angeles, "I have conducted eight Labor Seminars this year. Six of them were for students of nearly as many colleges round about. Two were composed of preachers.

"I brought them down here, had them addressed by a longshoreman, an A. F. of L. man, and a business man. After each address they asked questions, and when all was over I summarized. It has been the best educational venture I have ever conducted in all these years. The groups have agreed that they got more stuff than they had ever received in the same time elsewhere. Of course, the longshoremen have a real story. I am planning to write it up shortly."

The Federation Unit of the Pacific Northwest Conference has been carrying on an unusually successful "Pamphlet Reading Circle Plan" for about a year.

Groups of six persons, who agree to read one pamphlet a week for six weeks, have been organized and supplied with significant pamphlets. Each group is given "A Selected List of Pamphlets and Leaflets" which includes in its 54 titles: "Religion and Democracy in Social Action," by Frank Horne; "Where Are We Going," by Bishop Edgar Blake; "A Door of Opportunity," by Sherwood Eddy. For details address Mr. Clint Lee, 501 East Pine Street, Seattle, Wash.

Before speaking at the Wesley Foundation at the University of Wyoming at Laramie, C. C. W. had dinner at the Wyoming Student Cooperative. Thirty-seven young men were providing themselves with three meals per day, seven days per week, at a monthly cost of only $17.00. Eighteen of the students had furnished rooms in the house at the rate of $5.00 to $6.00 per month. Rev. Roy Hills and Rev. Clair Hoyt, Federation members, who led a discussion on cooperatives at the Snowy Range, Wyo., Epworth League Institute, are responsible for this cooperative.

When the manager of a W. T. Grant store in Paterson, N. J., did not readily accede to the request of his unionized employees to bargain collectively for better conditions, the Union (United Retail and Wholesale Employees Workers of America, C. I. O.) organizer called on the Rev. Edwin F. Rose of Simpson M. E. Church for a hearing of their case.

Rev. Rose called in a fellow minister and eventually a group of ten, composed of ministers and Y.W.C.A. representatives, held a meeting to hear both strikers and manager. "The ministers were pretty straight and shrewd in their questions, and they worked on the manager for his lack of real bargaining spirit." Result: Within a week the strike was settled with a good agreement.

The Mail Bag

A VICTORY. "When I came last fall I found considerable race discrimination. Negroes were not 'urged' to come to the big Methodist School of Religion. Neither did they show up at the reception for the new ministers. Nor at the Epworth League Institutes. I raised . . . the issue with the result that from now on Negroes will have full opportunity in all Methodist schools of religion, and at receptions."—*E. B. (Ohio).*

BULLETIN PRODUCES RESULTS. "I had some Social Questions Bulletins lying around the shop. A man came in, who has no use for churches any more, and picked up one of the Bulletins. He read one article and looked up saying, 'I would go to a church like that and support it. Have they got a church here?' "—*An Iowa member.*

ECONOMIC DETERMINISM. A District Superintendent wrote to a Methodist pastor: "Whatever may be the faults of the capitalistic system, the present program of the Church is quite dependent upon capital and while that is so, I see no reason to alienate the good will of the capitalist who has even an imperfect interest in Methodist institutions."

S. O. S.

Our deficit to date is $1,014. We must count on *you* to help balance the budget by September 30th, the end of our fiscal year. Do not fail us!

1. Renew your membership and add at least one extra dollar.

2. Send in *immediately* the $2.00 you have accumulated in the "twenty-week dime collector" which we sent to all of our members who contribute less than $5.00 a year.

3. Send $1.00, $2.00 or $5.00 to pay for the membership (including the Social Questions Bulletin) of a friend.

DO IT TODAY!

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312